GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:176
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2015
Contaminated Drinking Water
Galla Shri Jayadev;Kher Smt. Kirron

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether arsenic, fluoride and other hazardous chemicals have been found in excessive quantity in drinking water in various States across the country, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the number and percentage of people/habitations/household reported to be affected therefrom along with the remedial steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard, State/UT-wise during the last three years and the current year;

(c) the names of diseases reportedly caused due to consumption of contaminated water in excessive quantity;

(d) the financial and technical assistance provided by the Government to improve quality of water during the above period, State/UT-wise; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to monitor the quality of drinking water and the time frame fixed for providing safe drinking water to the entire population of the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF F DRINKING WATER & SANITATION
(SHRI BIRENDER SINGH)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.
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Statement referred in the reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 176 due for reply on 10/12/2015

(a) The State departments dealing with rural drinking water supply have reported arsenic, fluoride, iron, salinity, nitrate and heavy/toxic elements in some parts of the country with concentrations above prescribed permissible limits in rural drinking water sources. The heavy/toxic elements being reported from the laboratories set up in the country include Manganese, Copper, Aluminum, Mercury, Uranium, Lead, Cadmium, Chromium, Selenium and Zinc.

(b) The population and number of rural habitations which are yet to be provided safe drinking water and affected with above mentioned contaminants as on 1/4/2012, 1/4/2013, 1/4/2014 and 1/4/2015 are at Annexure- IA, IB, IC and ID respectively. The percentage of rural population affected with water quality problems and who are yet to be provided safe drinking water as on date (4/12/2015) is about 3.7%, say about 4% of the total habitations in the country. The Ministry has advised all States to provide safe drinking water based piped water supply schemes in all water quality affected habitations with special priority to arsenic and fluoride. Since such schemes take long gestation period and that rural people cannot be put to health risk, the Ministry has advised to provide community water purification plants as a short term measure in all remaining arsenic and fluoride affected habitations by March' 2017. The idea is to make available 8-10 litres of safe drinking water for drinking and cooking purposes quickly. The coverage of water quality affected habitations along with population benefitted reported by States during the last three years and the current year 2015-16 is at Annexure-IIA, IIB, IIC and IID restively . Though the States have not done enough data entry into the online Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the number of community water purification plants mostly based on Reverse Osmosis technology installed so far under various programmes known from mutual discussions, review meetings, video conferences and IMIS is at Annexure- III.

(c) Prolonged consumption of excess arsenic in drinking water may cause Arsenicosis (Keratosis and Melanosis). The symptoms range from skin lesions to even cancer. Excess fluoride in drinking water may cause dental, skeletal and non-skeletal fluorosis. Many of the heavy metals/ toxic elements may cause a variety of health problems including cancer.

(d) The funds released to the States under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme during the last 3 years and current financial year is at Annexure-IV. This include certain earmarked funds for States having arsenic, fluoride problems and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome.
(e) Out of the releases made to the States, 3% funds could be utilized for Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance activities which interalia include setting up and testing water quality in laboratories at various levels. During the year 2014-15, about 40 lakh drinking wter samples have been tested in 2,196 water quality testing laboratories. During the current year till date, about 20 lakh sources have been reported to be tested. The Ministry desires to provide community water purification plants in arsenic and fluoride affected habitations by March' 2017 and piped water supply from safe surface water sources in all water quality affected habitations by the year 2022, subject to availability of adequate funds.

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